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DS Returns Alien Smuggler to United States; Sentenced to 5 Years

In March 2002, a jury for the Central District of California found a major alien smuggler from Beverly Hills, Charles Joseph Avestro Becker, guilty of fraud and misuse of visas and inducing illegal aliens to enter the United States. Becker was sentenced to 5 years in federal prison with 3 years supervised probation upon completion of his sentence.

Becker's sentence was from the high range of the sentencing guidelines, the judge finding him culpable for operating an illegal immigration-related entrepreneurship (assisting 25 or more aliens to illegally enter the United States), perjury, intimidation of witnesses, and obstruction of justice. In addition, Becker and his five former employees were formally charged in the Philippines for fraud and related activities.

The investigation by Diplomatic Security agents in Los Angeles and Manila and the Philippine National Bureau of Investigation determined that Becker, a 53-year-old Philippino-American residing

in Beverly Hills, became a millionaire by operating a vast alien smuggling ring in the Philippines and the United States over the past 23 years. The criminal organization provided fraudulent documentation for U.S. visas to thousands of clients for approximately \$3,000 each. Once in the country, his organization would issue fraudulent social security and immigration documents so that clients could seek employment.

This investigation demonstrates that alien smuggling operations involve international criminal organizations and generate huge profits. Meticulous coordination among foreign and domestic law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, and embassy consular officers was key to breaking the case.

The resulting arrests and prosecutions open a new chapter as law enforcement and prosecutors in the United States and the Philippines worked in tandem to bring the offenders to justice. ⚙

